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for achievements

# Full Circle

Fall/Winter | 2008





## Perspective from the Director

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “*PUT PATIENT CARE FIRST*”? It is not just about making sure follow-up appointments are made or that prescriptions are filled and delivered on time. “*Putting patient care first*” encompasses everything we do, directly or indirectly, that has a positive affect on the overall well-being of the veteran.

“*Putting patient care first*” includes having dedicated, competent staff and volunteers who go above and beyond—even at times, thinking outside the box—to make positive things happen. It’s rethinking the way care is delivered that is focused on the preferences of the resident. It’s about doing the little things—an informational luncheon for caregivers, a boat ride on a lake or river, or selecting a gift for a loved one from the Annual Patient Christmas Gift Shop. It also involves making changes to further enhance the care veterans receive.

We do not stop putting the veteran first when they walk out the door. VA Butler Healthcare is committed to providing quality, overall care, to the thousands of veterans treated through our facilities and in their homes each year.

So, when you here the phrase “*putting patient care first*” you will not only think of it as a **Power of Performance Goal**—you will also think of VA Butler Healthcare.

*Patricia Nealon*

Patricia Nealon  
Medical Center Director

Joan B. Dunlap, former resident and Navy veteran, proudly displays her insignia blanket, pictures, crafts and other personal mementos as part of the Cultural Transformation initiative.

on the  
cover

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[www.butler.va.gov](http://www.butler.va.gov)

### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT:



**Patricia Nealon**  
Director



**Richard Cotter**  
Associate Director for Operations



**Varsha Mehta, M.D.**  
Chief of Staff



**Patricia Corr**  
Behavioral Health Executive



**Sharon Parson**  
Associate Director  
for Patient Care Services

To submit articles, editorials, letters or story ideas for possible inclusion, please contact Dave Virag at 724-285-2576 or Paula McCarl at 724-285-2575.

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# Stats

(as of June 30, 2008,  
end of 3rd Quarter of FY2008)

Number of  
Employees

561

Number of  
Volunteers

616

Number of  
Volunteer Hours

34,368

Number of  
Veterans Served

17,325

Number of  
Outpatient Visits

93,798

Number of  
Unique Patients

17,325

Number of  
Inpatients Treated

607

## For Your Information

### Volunteer Services Assisting with Voter Registration

Earlier this year, the Department of Veterans Affairs assigned Volunteer Services to assist in-house veterans with voter registration and absentee ballots. However, any veteran may contact VA Butler's Volunteer Services Department at 724-285-2575 or 724-285-2576 for information and/or assistance.



### Audiology has Moved to Room 100W

VA Butler Healthcare recently completed the renovation for the new Audiology Department and relocated the program to the main building. Veterans requiring Audiology services are to report to Specialty Clinics, first floor, building 1, room 100W.

### Power of Performance Goals

- put **PATIENT CARE** first
- practice progressive **LEADERSHIP**
- promote improved **BUSINESS PROCESSES**
- produce meaningful **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**



### Mark your calendar!

### National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week is February 8-14, 2009

The Salute is a way of remembering and showing compassion for our nation's hospitalized veterans...thanking them for their service and sacrifices. During this week, "**Special Guests**" will visit with residents and deliver valentines, cards, letters and posters. Persons interested in participating in the program should contact Volunteer Services at 724-285-2576 or 724-285-2575.

#### MISSION:

Our mission is to provide excellent healthcare and services to our nation's veterans.

#### VISION:

We will continually improve healthcare services to every patient we serve. We will be a leader in providing healthcare value and be the employer of choice for our staff.

#### VALUES:

Compassion, Commitment, Excellence, Professionalism, Integrity, Accountability, Stewardship.

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION is not a new idea. For many years now, companies, organizations and individuals have been rethinking the way they interact with others and the way service is delivered to their customers (or consumers, residents, patients, constituents, etc.). Cultural Transformation is making changes that focus on the needs/preferences of the individual, not the organization. The VA is one such facility that has embraced the concept of Cultural Transformation and put it to work in its nursing care program.

# Cultural Transf



Joan B. Dunlap is a very proud 83 year old Navy veteran. Earlier this year, Ms. Dunlap suffered an injury requiring her to recuperate at VA Butler Healthcare. She is an avid crafts person and enjoyed making sun catchers and helping the other veterans with the crafts as well. Of her experience, she comments "I loved it here and was sorry to leave...I made a lot of friends...and I had a lot of visitors to see all my crafts and pictures in my room...it was like being at home."

The importance of implementing a Cultural Transformation program for nursing care is that it lessens a person's anxiety about going into a nursing home and makes them more receptive and responsive to treatment. This is accomplished by reshaping care practices from the Traditional Medical Model (i.e. institutional) of care to a New Transformed Model (i.e. home-like). The Traditional Medical Model centers on the needs, or operation, of the facility and the availability of the staff. In the New Transformed Model, the care is centered on the needs of the resident. (See the difference between the 2 models in the chart on the right.)

Transforming care practices to the new model not only involves educating and changing the mind-set of staff; it also involves; changing terminology to promote the new model; actively engaging other departments and individuals in the process; and changing the physical environment.

A key aspect of transformation is changing terminology. Certain terms can invoke a myriad of emotions and responses that can be either negative or positive. The Traditional Medical Model uses

such terms as *patient* and *nursing home* which, for some, bring to mind the rigidity of an institution.



Whereas the terms used in the New Transformed Model have been revised to be more reflective of the home. For example, in-house veterans are referred to as “residents.” The veteran resides in a “Community Living Center.” The residents live in communities called “The Village of Valor” (3rd Floor) and the “Halls of Honor” (4th Floor).

Cultural Transformation is not an initiative of the nursing department. It is a program that encompasses all aspects of the facility, from Audiology to Volunteer Services. The veterans overall well-being is affected not only by the direct care he/she receives, but also by the indirect services



# Transformation

## RESHAPING THE WAY CARE IS DELIVERED

provided behind the scenes through administrative and other departments. To generate awareness about Cultural Transformation, to implement changes and to encourage participation, VA Butler Healthcare has instituted a Cultural Transformation Committee comprised of representatives from the facility’s various departments. For example, the Nutrition and Food Services Department works closely with the nursing staff to enhance meal service. Veterans are afforded the opportunity to eat their meals in a dining room setting with centerpieces and linen table clothes and napkins. Another example is the “Buddy Program” in which staff are encouraged to visit and develop friendly rapports with the residents.

Another critical aspect of implementing a Cultural Transformation program is making aesthetic changes to the physical environment. Dependent upon the resources available, the degree to which these changes occur may vary. The physical changes must be complimentary to the transformation model of creating a comfortable, home-like setting. Some of the physical changes that have occurred at VA Butler are: veterans may personalize (decorate) their bedroom with familiar items such as pictures, blankets, pillows, etc.; non-institutional style furniture, bedding and window treatments have been ordered and installed; each

Traditional Medical Model	New Transformed Model
• staff provide “treatments”	• Nurture the human spirit
• residents follow facility routine	• facility follows resident’s routine
• staff float	• permanent assignments
• staff make decisions for veterans	• residents make their own decisions
• facility belong to staff	• facility is resident’s own home
• structured activities	• spontaneous activity 24 hours
• departmental focus	• team
• staff know resident by diagnosis	• staff know residents

veteran has a TV in their bedroom; the halls and rooms have been painted; and moveable closet rods, towel warmers and spa tubs have been installed .

Recently, VA Butler received confirmation to design and build a new Community Living Center on the campus. The Center will be designed to reflect the home-like environment indicative of the New Transformed Model of Care. The Community Living Center will consist of 60 single bedrooms with amenities centrally located such as a dining room, kitchen, chapel and activities room. Construction is expected to begin 2009.

In today’s VA, Cultural Transformation is an important tool used to improve the quality of care provided to veterans. It requires a commitment from staff (and volunteers) to rethink how care is delivered; and then, reshape perceptions and practices to meet this transformed method of healthcare delivery. Cultural Transformation is important because it not only improves clinical outcomes and veteran satisfaction, but because it puts the veteran first.



During the year, VA Butler Healthcare recognized the accomplishments of 147 employees. These employees made significant contributions in the provision of quality healthcare to thousands of veterans treated at or through the facility. There were 31 individuals and 3 teams who received awards from the Federal Executive Board (FEB) Excellence in Government, Cameos of Caring and the Federal Women's Program - Women of the Year. There were also 113 employees nominated in these and other national and regional award programs.

The largest group of recipients and nominees were for the Federal Executive Board (FEB) Excellence in Government Awards Program. The FEB began as a presidential idea to bring together representatives of federal agencies within a city/region to share information, discuss problems, and improve communication and coordination of services among the various organizations. Each year, the FEB recognizes and rewards those individuals and/or teams who have made significant contributions in their workplace. VA Butler Healthcare had 25 individuals and 3 teams receive gold, silver and bronze awards.

The FEB award winners were:

#### **Gold Award Winners:**

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE  
(Medical/Scientific Field)

**Varsha Mehta, M.D.,** Chief of Staff

OUTSTANDING CLERICAL EMPLOYEE

**Denise Tilko,** Administrative Officer  
for Facilities Management

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

**Ravi Kumar, M.D.,** Primary Care

#### **Silver Award Winners:**

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE  
(Medical/Scientific Field)

**Heather Weiland,** Kinsiotherapist,  
Rehab Department

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE  
(All Other Fields)

**Rose Woodward,** Quality Systems Manager,  
Quality Systems Management

OUTSTANDING SUPERVISOR/  
MANAGER IN A PROFESSIONAL SERIES

**Marcia Schoeffel,** Behavioral Health Manager,  
Behavioral Health

**Carol Weitzel, RN,** Clinical Manager,  
Patient Care Services Department

OUTSTANDING ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEE

**Lori Cooper,** Management Analyst,  
Director's Office

OUTSTANDING SUPERVISOR/MANAGER  
IN A CLERICAL SERIES

**Dawn Staph,** Administrative Coordinator,  
Primary Care Services

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

**Tanya McCallister,** Supported Employment/  
Minority Veteran Program Coordinator,  
Behavioral Health

CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

**Gloria Wenzel,** Clinical Information Systems  
Coordinator (Consultant), Health Information  
Management Systems

#### **Bronze Award Winners:**

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE  
(All Other Fields)

**Brian Marcyjanik,** Safety Officer,  
Quality Systems Management

OUTSTANDING ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEE

**Laurie Young,** Human Resource Specialist,  
Human Resources

OUTSTANDING TECHNICAL EMPLOYEE

**Lauren Heiger,** Lead Program Support Assistant,  
HIMS/Business Office

**Vauna Proper,** Budget Analyst,  
Facility Management

OUTSTANDING SUPERVISOR/MANAGER  
IN A TECHNICAL SERIES

**Robert Schlager,** Fire Chief,  
Facility Management

OUTSTANDING CLERICAL EMPLOYEE

**Barbara Fair, LPN,** Medical Support Assistant,  
Transitional Care

OUTSTANDING TRADES AND CRAFTS EMPLOYEE

**Dennis Bintrim,** Maintenance Mechanic,  
Facility Management

OUTSTANDING SUPERVISOR/MANAGER  
IN A TRADES AND CRAFT SERIES

**Eric Saeler,** Maintenance Supervisor,  
Facility Management

OUTSTANDING SERVICE EMPLOYEE SUPERVISOR

**Denny Notareschi,** Housekeeping Supervisor,  
Environmental Services

OUTSTANDING TEAM AWARD

Healthier US Veteran/MOVE! Team:

**Laurie Conti,** MPT, Rehab Department

**Susan Leslie,** Registered Dietician,  
Food and Nutrition Services

**Trudy Levere, RN,** Primary Care

**Valerie Hansen, CRNP,** Behavioral Health

**Jessica Esslinger,** Registered Dietician,  
Food and Nutrition Services

**Tammy McLaughlin, LPN,** Primary Care

Project Section Team:

**Bruce Berdy,** Engineering Technician,

Gold, Silver and Bronze FEB Awardees—  
pictured from Left to right (standing): **Dennis Bintrim, Dan Michalek, Robert Schlager, Brian Marcyjanik,**  
**Lauren Heiger, Eric Saeler, Mary Jane Niebauer** (Seated): **Dawn Staph, Denise Tilko and Tanya McCallister**



Bronze FEB award—Healthier US Veteran/Move! Team—pictured (left to right):  
**Valerie Hansen, Jessica Esslinger, Susan Leslie, Trudy Levere, Laurie Conti and Tammy McLaughlin**





# COMPLISHMENTS OF STAFF

## Facility Management

**Jude Spurdute**, Engineering Technician,

Facility Management

**Dan Michalek**, General Engineer,

Facility Management

## HEROIC ACT AWARD

**Robert Wilhite**, Motor Vehicle Operator,

Facility Management

## COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

**Virginia Yelland**, AA to the Chief of Staff,

Chief of Staff's Office

**Karen E. Grove, RN, MSN, CARN, AP-CS**,

Clinical Nurse Specialist,

Behavioral Health Services

## ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

**Lindsey Baker**, Physical Therapist,

Home Base Primary Care

## OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

**Mary Jane Niebauer, PH.D.**, Clinical

Psychologist/PTSD Specialist,

Behavioral Health Services

## CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

Home Based Primary Care Team:

**Robin Anthony, CRNP**, Primary Care

**Lindsey Baker**, Physical Therapist,

Home Based Primary Care

**Amy Barnhart, RN**, Community Based Care

**Mary Bittner, RN**, Community Based Care

**Flaud Carey**, Program Assistant,

Community Based Care

**Sharyn Fletcher, RN**, Community Based Care

**Cherie Freeland, RN**, Community Based Care

**Renata Konecny**, Psychologist,

Community Based Care

**Nancy Kummer**, Supervisor Community

Services, Transitional Care

**Debra McDonald**, Program Assistant,

Adult Day Healthcare Program, Transitional Care

**Madge Miele**, Social Worker,

Community Based Care

**Deborah Modjeski**, Pharmacist, Primary Care

**Joyce Panella, RN**, Community Based Care

**Carol Schaffer**, Social Worker, Community

## Based Care

**Joanne Sekerak**, Registered Dietician,

Food and Nutrition Services

**Julie Thompson, RN**, Community Based Care

**Virginia Viselli**, Registered Dietician,

Food and Nutrition Services

**William Dean**, Community Based Care

The Cameos of Caring Awards Program was created in 1999 to honor exceptional bedside nurses. Facilities select a nurse(s) who has demonstrated excellence in nursing care, served as an advocate for patients and families and embodies the essence of the nursing profession. VA Butler Healthcare had two nurses receive awards for advanced practice and general nursing.

## The Cameos of Caring Award recipients were:

**Karen E. Grove, RN, MSN, CARN, AP-CS**,

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Behavioral Health Services

**Amy Barnhart, RN**, Community Based Care

There were 4 employees who received awards from the Federal Women's Program - Women of the Year. This program focuses on female employees who have exemplified a high degree of character, job interest and performance and who have evidenced a substantial contribution

to women in the federal government. The Federal Women's Program - Women of the Year recipients were:

## Silver Award Winner:

**Linda Eury**, Work Leader, Environmental Services

## Bronze Award Winners:

**Sharon Parson, RN**, Associate Director for Patient Care Services

**Sharon Boyle, RN**, Nursing Program Special Assistant, Patient Care Services

**Barb Taylor**, Recreation Therapist, Patient Care Services

"I am extremely proud of the staff at VA Butler for their dedication to better meet the needs of our nation's heroes—striving for excellence, achieving excellence and making a positive difference in the lives of our veterans."

—**Patricia Nealon**, Director,  
VA Butler Healthcare

**Varsha Mehta, M.D.**, Chief of Staff— FEB Gold Award Winner— Outstanding Professional Employee (Medical/Scientific Field)



**Denise Tilko**, Administrative Officer for Facilities Management – FEB Gold Award Winner – Outstanding Clerical Employee



**Ravi Kumar, M.D.**, Primary Care – FEB Gold Award Winner— Outstanding Service to the Public



Bronze FEB Award—Home Based Primary Care Team—pictured Left to right (back row, standing): **William Dean, Carol Schaffer, Robin Anthony, Mary Bittner, Lindsay Baker, Cherie Freeland**; (middle row, standing): **Virginia Viselli, Debbie McDonald, Julie Thompson, Joanne Sekerak**; (seated): **Amy Barnhart, Sharon Fletcher & Debbie Modjeski**



**Linda Eury**, Federal Women's Program—Women of the Year silver award winner



Cameos of Caring Award Recipients (pictured left to right): **Karen Grove and Amy Barnhart**



## Annual Patient Gift Shop and Adopt-A-Veteran Program Help to Brighten the Holidays!



**Ermania Kelly,**  
VAVS Deputy Representative for US Catholic Conference  
and volunteer, has been helping with the Annual Christmas Gift Shop  
since its inception in 1976.

**The Annual Patient Christmas Gift Shop began in 1976** and will be celebrating 32 years this year. The program is coordinated by volunteers of the VA Volunteer Services (VAVS) Committee and other volunteers at the facility, and is supported by veteran service organizations and community members with donations of gift items and money. Approximately \$319,027 has been donated to the program that has served over 7,000 veterans through the years.

The gift shop, held the week after Thanksgiving, is for in-house residents (and just recently, veterans in the Adult Day Healthcare and In-Home Care Programs) at VA Butler Healthcare. Through this program, residents are provided an opportunity to shop for items for their family. Volunteers wrap the gifts, attach a greeting card, and then package the gifts for mailing. The gifts are free, as well as the mailing of the packages.

In addition to the gift shop, the Domiciliary Recreation Therapy Department offers an "Adopt-A-Veteran" Christmas Program that helps provide a resident in the Domiciliary with a complete outfit ensemble (i.e. shoes, socks, pants, shirt, sweater, undershirt, jacket, belt, etc.). The program began 8 years ago with the generosity of The Supreme Cootiette Club, Fireflies #85, and its VAVS Representative, Millie Russin.

Persons interested in supporting these programs are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Services Department at 724-285-2575 or 724-285-2576. Contributions are accepted year-round.

Employees with  
**25** or more  
years of service

**25** years

**Marsha Schoffel,** Behavioral Health

**Jeffrey Farmer,** Nutrition & Food

**Patricia Wilson,** HR

**Susan Black,** EEO Mgr Chief Of Staff

**30** years

**Mary Ann Wagner,** Library

**John Brewer,** Environmental Mgmt Service

**Kathi Sliker,** Patient Care Service

**David Crawford,** Nutrition & Food

**Victor Nolan,** Engineering Service

**Jill Haugh,** Business Office

**35** years

**Richard Harris,** Pathology & Lab

**John Knox,** Dental Service

**Bert Belles,** Engineering Service

**James Mcavoy,** Business Office

**40** years

**Madeline Mcquistion,**

Acquisition Material Mgmt Svc

*(The employees listed achieved these milestones during the 4th quarter of Fiscal Year 2008.)*